

PARENTHING WEEKLY

The plan nobody made

Why the first term back fails on
coordination, not accountability.

17 August to 21 August 2026 | parenthing.ie

A record proves it. It does not prevent it.

The co-parenting software conversation this month is fixed on the record. Keep the trail, log the messages, prove who agreed to what. Back to school, the pitch goes, is about accountability and keeping children out of the middle. It sounds responsible. It is also aimed at the wrong moment.

The failures that actually derail a child's first term back do not happen for want of a record. They happen because a plan was never made out loud between two homes. A club gets signed up for in one house on a week the child spends in the other. A bus run gets volunteered with nobody free to drive. You cannot hold anyone to account for a plan that was never really agreed. By the time the record shows the gap, the match is already missed.

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8 weeks

The first unbroken stretch of the new school year, from schools reopening in late August to the Halloween break beginning 26 October, with no mid-term to reset a routine that is not holding.

Department of Education standardised calendar, Circular 0018/2026.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

Name the driver, not the agreement

Before the first full week, sit with the same calendar and say every recurring commitment out loud. Which club, which day, whose week it lands on, and who is actually doing the driving. Not who agreed to it in principle. Who is in the car.

If nobody can name the driver, it is not a plan yet, it is a good intention waiting to become a Tuesday scramble. A shared calendar both homes can see turns a vague yes into a fixture everyone has already agreed to keep.



A missed pickup is rarely carelessness. More often it is a plan that never got made out loud.

Agree it early, in one shared place, and most of the blame you would have logged never needs to exist.

Start the term agreed, not accountable

Around one in sixteen adults in Ireland are separated or divorced, so a great many families are working out this same first term across two homes right now. None of them need a better paper trail for the autumn. They need the plan settled before the first club clashes with the first pickup.

ParenThing gives both homes one calm, shared calendar and a place to agree the week before it arrives. Less to prove later, because less goes wrong now.

Get started at parenthing.ie

SOURCES

Department of Education, standardisation of the school year 2026/27 to 2028/29 (Circular 0018/2026), gov.ie

Central Statistics Office, marital status (Census 2022), Urban and Rural Life in Ireland 2025, cso.ie

